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Academic freedom

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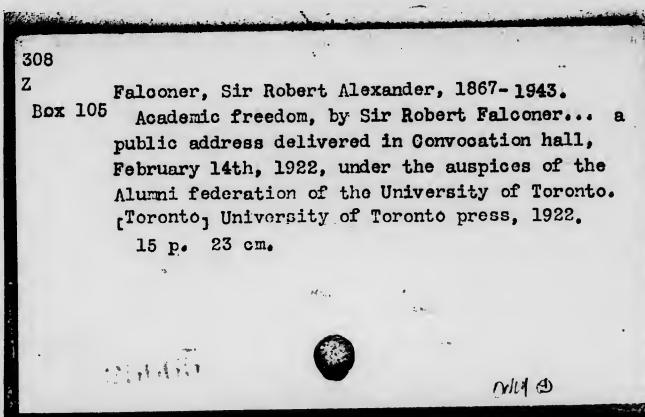
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ACADEMIC FREEDOM

By

SIR ROBERT FALCONER
President, University of Toronto



1 p.¹¹ Address delivered in Convocation Hall, February 14th, 1922,
under the auspices of the Alumni Federation of
the University of Toronto.

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Academic Freedom

One of the most interesting of the discussions which took place at the Conference of the Universities of the Empire held in Oxford in July 1921 arose out of a casual remark made by a Vice-Chancellor of an English University. In a paper on university finance advocating greater support from the British Treasury he interjected a caveat against more governmental control, instancing the hampering conditions from this cause reported to him as existing in a Canadian provincial university. The speaker as it turned out had been quite mis-informed, but the importance of his remark was due to the ensuing repudiation of state-control by another eminent Englishman in which he carried his English hearers very strongly with him. The universities of Great Britain regard with alarm any attempt by a government office in London to increase its authority over their internal affairs. Uniformity, classification, official direction they will have none of. Poor though they be, in some respects very poor, they esteem their spiritual freedom as greater riches than all the treasures of Whitehall.

Such an attitude is very English. Mark Pattison referring to the evil effects of the interference in university concerns by Henry VIII and the Stuarts says, "that we should have the management of our own affairs, and the regulation of our own studies, has been contended for as a sacred principle. Most justly, and much more precious still, as the one great condition without which we cannot fulfil our functions as national teachers, is independence of thought". (*Essays I*, 449). It is the infringement of this liberty by any official of government that is dreaded in England, as it is not in France or in Germany, where the connection with the State is an accepted order. The French scholar Durkheim claims that the third Republic restored the University, and that after 1870 the great minister Duruy did much to recreate its spirit "making possible scientific laboratories in which by the anonymous contributions of teachers and pupils the work of genius could be carried on in a collective and unbroken manner, and special schools were brought together being kept from too narrow specialisation and made parts of a truly encyclopaedic university" (*La vie universitaire à Paris*).

As regards the German universities Paulsen asserts that political supervision did not interfere with the freedom of teaching and investigation which they proudly claimed, and which in fact they did exemplify in the 19th century in such a way as to give them widespread influence in the world at large.

But shortly before Paulsen wrote in 1902, a privat-docent of physics had been removed from his chair in Berlin because he belonged to the social-democratic party, which leads him to utter this prophetic sentence: "We shall not forget Lessing's wise words that there are limits beyond which patriotism as well as confessionalism ceases to be a virtue. Supersensitive nationalism has become a very serious menace to all the nations of Europe: they are in danger of losing their appreciation of human values. In its exaggerated form nationalism, like sectarianism, destroys the moral as well as the logical conscience: just and unjust, good and bad, true and false lose their meanings: what we call despicable and inhuman when others do it, we in the same breath, advise our own country to do to a foreign people" (259), and further, "Will not the favour which science, in the persons of some of its representatives, is beginning to find in the eyes of the authorities, deprive it eventually of its dearest treasure, of its innocence, as it were?" (262).

It would, however, be difficult to maintain that the action of the German professors at the outbreak of the war was due even for the most part to the fact that they were civil servants. The cause lay deeper.

The greater individualism claimed by British professors is rooted in the character, tradition and experience of the British people. To understand it we must go back to the home and to the school. Until recently liberal English education has been based upon the public-school, and narrow though the boy might be in many respects the idea of his personal rights was disciplined into him. This quality was seen in Thring, one of the most eminent of the Victorian masters who was vehemently opposed to Governmental control, an attitude in which he showed true to type. Even the intellectual development of England bears this mark. "It is the individualism of the English character, the self-reliant strength of natural genius, which comes out most strongly in its great examples of scientific work" (Merz, *History of European Thought I*. 279). In fact most of the outstanding discoveries in science which have been made in England have been by men living in isolation, often without the support of a university. England has suffered by insisting too strongly upon the power of isolated genius. "For want of organisation of research and teaching, such as other countries possessed, the ideas of English thinkers have frequently lain dormant or been elaborated by foreign talent" (Merz *op. cit.* I. 300).

The history of English Universities is rich in great figures who had the courage to protest against the claims of Kings, Chancellors or Archbishops, and who created the tradition of independence which is so consonant with British character. But the virtue lay at times hard by a vice. Indolent fellows of colleges repudiated restraint, and in the 18th century they fell into a condition which Gibbon's bitter pen etches for all time:

"The fellows or monks of my time were decent easy men, who supinely enjoyed the gifts of the founder; their days were filled by a series of uniform employments; the chapel and the hall, the coffee-house and the common-room, till they retired, weary and well satisfied to a long slumber. From the toil of reading, or thinking, or writing, they had absolved their conscience."

Even as late as the early 19th century similar abuses partly due to academic freedom lingered on:

"The public opinion of the University had come to regard a college as a club into which you should get only clubable men. Then they dispensed each other from the obligation to study for seven years, and from the performance of those exercises which had been the guarantee of study, so that the original object of the foundation, the promotion of learning, was wholly abrogated. The visitors of the Colleges, mostly bishops, did not interfere to check this abuse, so that the only resource to compel the performance of the trust was to call in the intervention of the sovereign power, the State, which was done at last in 1854" (Mark Pattison *Memoirs*, 75).

Though it can hardly be denied that the effect of this and subsequent University Commissions has been beneficial, even an outsider cannot fail to sympathise with the opposition to more extended State-control in Britain, for it would be a great misfortune were a distant and impersonal bureaucracy in Whitehall to issue ordinances in restraint of the freedom which gives its distinction to the ancient English academic life. Those self-governing colleges are rich in character, and there is nothing more irritating to an unworldly scholar than the rigidity of the mere official. They cannot understand each other. Scorn confronts dignity; though the scholar, restless for freedom, often forgets that his own comfort may depend upon the very regularity with which the official mind runs in its grooves.

The American universities have had their own experience. It has differed somewhat in the privately endowed from that in those supported in whole or in part by the State. Harvard, Yale and Princeton have traditions and constituencies which make their freedom probably as secure as that of Oxford or Cambridge; but some of the newer institutions which rely for support upon a few individual benefactors, usually devoid of any academic training or outlook, are not yet firmly settled upon their foundations. There are also the immense State Universities. The older of these already have had firm traditions established against political, partisan or sectarian influence, but troubles arise constantly in the younger universities of the middle and further West, where as yet there is little well informed public opinion as to the real character and purpose of higher education. Their story as it is gathered from the investigations made by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching makes unpleasant reading:

"Most of the stronger State universities have had to go through the fire of both political and denominational partizanship before they reached that stage of growth in which freedom of speech and security of speech were guaranteed to their teachers" (1908), but "Our stronger State universities have educated their legislatures into the conception that good educational organisation and partisan policies are incompatible, and they form to-day the most encouraging exhibits of our program of democratic government" (1909). "No political party and no sectarian body as such is undertaking to-day to control the State institutions of higher learning" (1912).

The same may be said of the provincial universities of Canada at present.

But academic freedom of this sort is the mark of a stable, civilised,

and highly intelligent community. Within the last thirteen years there have been several crude and harsh exhibitions of partizanship in the universities of the newer or less educated parts of the United States—in Oklahoma, Florida, Kentucky, Montana, Iowa. Institutions have been made the foot-ball of parties. President after President has been discharged without warning and often most unjustly, because he happened to be on the wrong side of politics or had fallen out with a stubborn and powerful Superintendent of Education who had greater influence. Professors also were sent about their business sometimes on political grounds, sometimes for incredibly trivial reasons. In one case a powerful minister of religion on a Board of Trustees demanded the resignation of some professors because they danced in public and smoked, and when he had his way his fellow trustees rewarded him by giving him the LL.D. (*Carnegie Reports*). Of course a community that could tolerate such crude interference is very immature.

In more than one instance private foundations also have suffered from the reactionary views of graduates, who, exhibit the very human frailty of idealising their past under subtle illusion, as in autumn a golden haze invests with brilliance the spotted and dying leaves of a distant forest). It is so easy to forget that there is also the greater glory of each recurrent spring which must grow into its own summer. But on the whole Dr. Pritchett is optimistic as regards the American State universities.

"The production of a body of State university trustees capable, catholic, and able to discharge their duties impartially is a conspicuous mark of high civilisation". (*Carnegie Report 1909*). "The ability to furnish a Board of efficient, fair-minded and devoted trustees for a State-university is a high test of the civilisation of any American Commonwealth". (*Carnegie Report 1912*).

Private universities undergo a trying period as long as benefactors are unduly active in the administration of their affairs, and happy is that institution which possesses friends broad-minded enough to recognise that their personal proclivities, desires, likes and dislikes should not determine the policies or the appointments of the university which their generosity has endowed.

A Chapter in Toleration

Academic Freedom is in fact one chapter in the history of Toleration, and is best understood as a phase of the general course of a people's development in liberty of thought.

In no country of the world has the idea of toleration had the same fascinating history as in England. The struggle for intellectual freedom was only a series of actions in the general campaign in which the effort for political liberty arouses in the common man a more absorbing interest. Take these sentences from Acton's *History of Freedom*

"The great political idea, sanctifying freedom and consecrating it to God, teaching men to treasure the liberties of others as their own, and to defend them for the love of justice and charity more than as a claim of right, has been the soul of what is great and good in the last two hundred years". (I 52). "So much of the hard fighting, the thinking, the enduring that has contributed to the deliverance of man from the power of man, has been the work of our countrymen, and of their descendants in other lands". (59). "The constant cause of this is to be found in active qualities of perseverance, moderation, individuality, and the many sense of duty". (60).

Since the days of Greece no literature has been so distinguished as that of England by appeals for freedom and the emancipation of the human mind. In 1644 John Milton procured for England the liberty of the press in the face of the "Printing Ordinance of Parliament" by the publication of the *Areopagitica*; in 1646 Jeremy Taylor struck a new note in his *Liberty of Propresyng*; in 1694 appeared Locke's extensive essay on *Toleration* chiefly in matters theological. Wordsworth having caught the spirit of Milton followed in the noble succession, though his Sonnets to Liberty express the passion of his earlier years for civil freedom.

But it was the 19th century that brought forth the most permanent and widespread results. And it cannot be questioned that one of the most potent single influences in the latter half of the century was Mill's essay *On Liberty*.

"Protection against the tyranny of the magistrate is not enough; there needs protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling; against the tendency of society to impose, by other means than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them; to fetter the development, and if possible prevent the formation, of any individuality not in harmony with its ways, and compel all characters to fashion themselves upon the model of its own. There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence, and to find that limit, and maintain it against encroachment, is as indispensable to a good condition of human affairs, as a protection against political despotism".

But even Mill's conception of Liberty was found to be too individualistic, and by 1870 "A closer and more organic relation between the individual and society was demanded, and men began to look for a theory of the State which should treat it as something more than a glorified policeman guaranteeing liberty merely by compelling its members to refrain from mutual aggression". Under the influence of thinkers like E. Caird and T. H. Green the idea was spread that "Liberty was a man's right to make the best of himself, and to make the best of himself was to take a share as a responsible citizen in the life of the State to which he belonged".

The 19th century was a peculiarly difficult period. Men's minds were greatly perturbed by the severe growing pains of advancing thought, and Science invested with a blaze of glory was hard on the eyes on which it broke with sudden illumination. Social questions also became the subject of bitter controversy. "Violent utterances came from conferences of Socialists on the one side, and uncompromising asser-

tions from the representatives of Leagues for the Defence of Liberty and Property on the other". (*Life of Ed. Caird* 329).

The universities were of necessity centres of fierce discussion. Just as at the Renaissance Humanism was suspect when it brought in a new freedom, so Science with its revolutionary conception was admitted at a very slowly opening door by the guardians of the older order. In Oxford the beginnings of this controversy were seen in the thirties in the struggle between Conservatism and Liberalism in religion which became known as the Oxford Movement. In the wider world this same struggle for freedom of thought grew acute when Darwin propounded his theory as to the *Origin of Species*. And not unnaturally so, for then Science not having learned her own limitations, some of her devotees were making undue claims. The older among us can remember the echoes of the dying struggle, Huxley, for instance, challenging his foes ecclesiastic in trenchant style. At that time elections to chairs in universities were carefully prepared for; social and political influence was invoked against the appointment of neologists or radicals. A candidate should be safe. Now we can see clearly that extreme charges were made on both sides.

Our generation being accustomed to the new order is unable to realise the magnitude of the disturbance, and marvels that the illusion that Science is godless has lingered so long in some quarters.

The person of Frederic Denison Maurice was one storm-centre in England in the fifties, and another appeared later in Scotland when Robertson Smith published views as to the authorship of the historical books of the Old Testament which seemed to be subversive of the inspiration of the Bible. He was a pioneer in the application of a new method, and had to suffer in his fight for freedom, though eventually he became a brilliant ornament of Cambridge. Like a good mariner who sees a gale rising that threatens to drive him on a lee shore he put to sea and weathered the storm. Since then the theological colleges of Scotland have adopted his point-of-view. To-day again there are mutterings and rumblings as of local storms in the academic world, the weather being sultry and men fearing for the social order. But this is only a new variant similar to what always accompanies change.

Throughout the century prolonged struggles in different realms of thought resulted not only in astounding scientific discoveries and great additions to knowledge, but in something far greater, a permanent liberation of the human mind; and as so often the poets were not the least persuasive teachers of that age.

"We may fairly say that in our State at least, within a single generation, a law of tolerance—not indifference, not scepticism, not disbelief, but one of those deep silent transformations that make history endurable—has really worked its way not merely into our statutes and courts of justice, but into manners, usage, and the common habits of men's minds". (*Morley, Politics and History* 19).

The Purpose of a University

The question of Freedom is more vital in a university than in any other institution of our Western civilisation. And that by reason of its essential idea and function. It exists for imparting ascertained knowledge and truth, for educating by this means those who shall become highly equipped citizens, many of them specialised for professional service, and to produce and maintain those whose primary duty is to investigate truth and to extend the boundaries of knowledge. By its very nature the university may become a focus of unrest and disquietude for the timid, for unless in it truth is being enthusiastically pursued and boldly faced it has lost its right to the glorious name: and men as a rule shrink from new views; they are too upsetting.

Universities are in fact the meeting-places of old and new. Many people would like to regard them as border-fortresses to keep back invaders from the well tilled fields of the civilised world; but if they were, they would soon be captured by virile nations who would occupy what lands they desired and add new demesnes to the old, in the midst of which the jagged battlements, roofless halls and silent keeps would stand as a warning that old fortresses are useless unless a powerful and progressive race is able to employ them in new methods of warfare. In so far as universities are suspected it is by those who conceive that they harbour a troop of irresponsible devotees of freedom liable to dash out at any moment and throw into confusion a countryside and its villagers, who have for years been peacefully thinking what their fathers thought before them. Unfortunately occasion is sometimes given for such an opinion, but this libertinism is rare. The genuine university man is too earnest in his search for truth to think that it is to be furthered by flippancy. He should have one fundamental enthusiasm, that Truth does exist, that the human mind has arrived at what it is justified in calling truth, and that Science can devote herself unreservedly to the investigation not only of the material world, but of the whole life of man in the certainty that its reasonableness will be confirmed.

But he also should not forget that life is more than a bundle of intellectual propositions, the truth of which is demonstrable to all right thinking persons. Truth presents herself before us veiled in so many prejudices and played upon by such different coloured lights from every quarter, that it is often hard to know surely whether we see her own features. Instincts and emotions guide us, and it is proverbially the man of faith, often a man seeing only one side of a truth but taking it as his guide, who gets the world to follow along the way to higher things.

Truths differ very greatly in the appeal they make to the emotions and therefore in their liability to be challenged. The facts of natural science may be considered as a rule in the clear cold light of the reason,

and unless hypotheses are based upon them which seem to undermine systems of morals or religion, they will be quietly discussed. Pure science is so objective that the element of personal belief hardly enters. But history, economics, politics, religion, all involve a certain personal attitude, often deep convictions and the maintenance of social or political opinions. History may contravene what is commonly held as the patriotic estimate of our country's good name; political economy or social science may conflict with political and personal interests; but most difficult of all is the field of religious history and philosophy, on definite views of which, really or supposedly, moral and spiritual values depend. Temperament, mental quality, ingrained tradition constitute in part the character of him who judges such questions. Facts that appeal to one man do not appeal to another. Indeed the competent scholar is not unlike an impartial judge. Historic evidence is presented to him, philosophic theories are argued before him, economic judgments are debated by their respective advocates, and it is his duty to weigh dispassionately everything that is said, to be sure that nothing vital or material is omitted which his own mind can suggest, even should it have been overlooked by the person who submitted the case. But when he comes to make up his mind, this fact or the other will weigh more or less according to his own attitude. Conservative or Liberal he cannot but give his judgment according to his best light. No one will deny that Lord Acton was a scientific historian, and yet he estimated the worth of facts from a moral standpoint believing firmly that in history there is an absolute right and wrong. To get at the truth of history it is necessary to read the character of those who made history. In that character lies the real truth of many actions which may be variously interpreted according to their surface appearance. Take for example the conduct of Sir Robert Peel in regard to Roman Catholic Emancipation and the Abolition of the Corn Laws. He has been severely criticised for reversals of policy on both these questions and his motives were severely impugned; but Lord Rosebery writing as a confessed admirer always gives him the benefit of the doubt, and though he is inclined to believe that he may have committed a political sin, he will not judge "the figure of the great minister, with feet perhaps of clay as well as iron, but with a heart at least of silver, and a head of fine gold". (*Miscellanies* I 237).

The theories of society so thickly strewn over the pages of our magazines are only semi-scientific, and the reception they get in the reviews depends chiefly upon the cast of mind of the reviewer. The radical is not necessarily a whit more scientific than the conservative. They may be equally truth-loving. But the conservative finding it harder to yield his cherished view may scrutinise his facts more carefully for evidence before he will change.

In matters of religion the subjective element is larger still, and the

verification of new theories is the more difficult because it is so often the result not of a number of compelling facts, but a more or less probable induction from many details which may individually be disputable. Again the difficulty is heightened by the inability of many to distinguish between religion and dogma, and by the rivalry of the Churches. It is therefore well-nigh impossible at present to have theology taught in a State University except in a country where a certain form of religion is by law established. But here also there has been great progress. Toleration grows as the fundamental beliefs of religion become fewer and simpler; not that this indicates a spirit of indifferentism, but rather a clearer understanding as to what is essential and what is a matter of opinion.

A university, I repeat, is a centre for the investigation and impartation of truth. Now truth does not belong to any one province or country or race. It reigns in a Commonwealth of which each university is as it were a nation, and the laws of the Commonwealth are valid in every part. Further, truth is manifold, and if we are to learn its many sidedness, freedom must be allowed to investigate and evaluate the facts that will lead to its proof. Universities are not pontifical colleges for the propaganda of authoritative doctrines, but self-governing Dominions inheriting assured truths which they test anew extending also the boundaries of knowledge. They cannot undertake to uphold orthodox creeds. The word "orthodox" does not fit the place. It implies fixity, whereas the comprehension of truth is always being enlarged. What university would adopt Marxian economics as its standard, or protection, or free trade, or Kantian philosophy, or republican, or monarchical government? It discusses the principles of all; it must not be compelled to confess itself the subject of any. If Germany had had more scientific historians who were true to their philosophic freedom, and fewer Treitschkes who turned their classrooms into centres for patriotic propaganda, her students might not have had to perish on the battlefields to uphold a false theory of the State.

No more valuable experience can a student get than from observing a professor examine the weakness or the strength of economic or social systems not in the spirit of a cynic or an optimist, but as a sincere seeker for the truth wherewith to improve human society; or in philosophy than to have been led by a genuine thinker below the superficial and unstable assumptions of the average man to the foundations of human reason.

The Freedom of the Professor

It is one of the most sacred privileges of a university that its professors shall enjoy academic freedom. In fact a university in which professors are overawed by political, social, or sectarian influence cannot

aspire to an honourable position in the Commonwealth of Learning. Just as we measure the progress of democratic government by its freedom from the spoils system so that faithful servants are not dispossessed whenever a new party comes into power, so we can measure the rank and stability of a university by the security given to a professor to pursue and expound his investigations without being compelled to justify himself to those who differ from him. Assuming average fundamental honesty and genuine sincerity, the results of the investigations of competent and well-trained men are not likely to differ in any one university from those that prevail in the great universities of the world. Philosophy is indeed a highly subjective discipline and has often been suspected. Probably it has never been taken more seriously anywhere than in Scotland where it had influential relations with the faculty of Divinity. In the recent *Life* of Edward Caird, Master of Balliol and sometime professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, his biographer writes:

"In the Scottish Universities certain circumstances combine to give to a professor with the gift and passion for teaching a rare opportunity. He enjoys complete freedom as a thinker and teacher, can deal with his subject without regard to any considerations except the good of the students, and without any limitations except those which spring from his own short-comings" (p. 51).

In my undergraduate days I have seen people shake their heads ominously about the subversive effects of Edward Caird's philosophy, but now that a generation has gone by I fail to see that he undermined the faith and morals of that very tenacious people.

The character of a professor's audience must be taken into account. He goes through a far more testing process than the writer of a book. The latter from his study with no restraining critic near, may throw any startling opinion upon the world under a reasonable expectation that if it is extravagant the book will sell. But the professor faces for several hours a week throughout the academic year an unusually keen company who soon take his measure. They quickly discover whether he is an original thinker or merely the adapter of other people's opinions. They are not under the spell of a political platform, and what one day may knock the bottom out of their convictions may be exchanged the next by some better idea that gives them a more real grasp of principle than they ever had. The student is learning to think for himself, and if we are afraid to give him this freedom, we must be sceptics as to the ability of the average educated man gradually to form opinions for himself. I do not say that all peoples are equally prepared for this intellectual freedom. But our Anglo-Saxon youth inheriting our traditions, nurtured in our ideals, sent forth from our homes, surrounded by our social, moral and political atmosphere have a healthy mind which is independent and capable of arriving at sane decisions. Such occasional shocks as a student gets may be what he needs, just as the storm seems to make the oak send its roots deeper.

But the professor has a duty to his class not to make too great demands on them. If he has arrived at his position, after much pains, he will be patient, and sympathetic with those whom he is teaching. He should be constructive rather than destructive, and replace that which he takes away with something better. To be at once a searcher for truth and to bear oneself modestly in its discovery and exposition is the mark of a thoroughly educated person. "The business of the higher education is, not to check, but to regulate (philosophy); not to prohibit speculation but to supply the discipline which alone can safely wield it" (Mark Pattison *Essays I* 425).

There is another side to the professor's duty which should not be overlooked. He is the servant of those whom he teaches; he will therefore endeavour to discover those facts in the multiform variety of truth which are relevant to the needs of his people, which will be intelligible to them and will equip them to fulfil their duties as citizens and as searchers for the truth. Again to quote from Pattison:

"A university is not to be considered an incorporation of teachers only, but one for the support and nurture of the higher intellect of the country. . . . Teachers should be independent but not isolated; they must be in sympathy and quick communion with the general movement of the national mind, indeed they will be themselves no small part of it; they will at least embody and represent the movement; they will at once show and control it; through them it will find its full vent.—The nation does not hire a number of learned men to teach its children; it educates them itself through an organ into which its own best intellect, its scientific genius is regularly drafted" (*Essays I*, 426).

"Independent but not isolated"; a most important position. He is not fixed for life in an easy place in which he is free to do as he will and say whatever he pleases. Secure he is and free from many of the cares of others, but only in order that in matters of the intellect he may become the servant of the nation. He should understand his people, interpret to them truth that is supra-national and become for them an embodiment of it. He must show them that even in the most recent and the narrowest of the sciences truth is more than a mere statement of facts; it is a system or body of thought of which the facts are as stars, more or less dimly seen within a constellation, and significant of the existence of some yet unrealised universe.

He is a citizen with a right to all the privileges of a citizen, but at the same time like a judge or a great civil servant he has high functions the exercise of which may make it wise for him not to perform all the offices of the ordinary citizen. Especially is this the case in a State University. Take the question of his right to participate actively in politics. Paulsen writing on German Universities has some judicious remarks:

"I am of opinion that the greatest possible scope should be given to a bold and impartial criticism. Here as in all human affairs criticism is a necessary function. When it strikes at what has outlived itself, at what is false and evil, at what interfered with the healthy development of the whole, it is, looked at from the standpoint of the life

of the people, a highly commendable thing. And it has a place in academic instruction also. It is an inevitable function of such instruction to turn the attention of the leaders of the coming generation towards the necessary development of public institutions along the lines of justice and public welfare"—but "Professors, the representatives of science, should not engage in politics, but should reflect upon the State and law; and it is of importance that their thoughts be heard by the politicians" (*German Universities* 253, 255).

The experience of the United States is that in the long run political influence in universities has had even worse effects than sectarian, and now that the large State universities are receiving from the legislatures such immense annual revenues, which also constitute the overwhelming portion of their income, it is more necessary than ever that cause shall not be given for any charge that the university furthers political partizanship. Like the courts it must serve the people as a whole irrespective of party.

It is therefore expedient that a professor in a State university should take no active share in party-politics. But this expediency does not involve a limitation of academic freedom. At most it involves a limitation of his freedom as a citizen, such however as is expedient for the performance of certain other specialised functions of a citizen, as for example those of a judge or a great civil servant. Were he to exercise his full rights in active politics he might disqualify himself for his higher privileges of service. It must not be overlooked that the freedom of speech by a citizen is different from the freedom of investigation and exposition of his subject by a professor in a class-room. Government policies are mainly matters of personal opinion, and as a rule are not the result of calm thought and to be dignified as reasoned convictions. Should a professor at any time feel constrained, for what he regards as the higher good of his country, to enter the field of party-politics, he should ask himself whether he ought not to abandon the secure seat which he holds as professor. Other men who enter politics take the risks to their positions that their action involves. They have no refuge to which to return in case of defeat.

Moreover, the professor is not a person who lives to himself; he is a member of the University community, the welfare of which depends upon the good-will of a government and of the people as a whole. When he makes public utterances therefore he does not involve himself alone. The public is prone to assume that he has some backing in the University for what he says, and that he is a representative of a wide circle of thought. Indeed his views are likely to be given much more importance because he is a professor than if he spoke as a private person. His words flash with reflected influence of which he cannot divest them. This means also that as a member of a community his action affects the fortunes of his fellows. The thoughtless or ill disposed portion of the public will find only too good grounds for an attack upon the whole university in the political utterances of the indiscreet or thoughtless

professor; and a government might without giving any reason easily show its displeasure in such a way as to affect adversely the fortunes of the institution and the financial positions of many guiltless and wiser colleagues. A professor in a State university cannot have it both ways, and be both an effective member of the staff, in which he will enjoy full academic freedom, and at the same time be an exponent of party views or of burning political questions. He should in the latter case take the risks of other citizens and not rely on a security which by his injudicious action he is endangering for others.

Governing Bodies

The position and responsibilities of Trustees, Governors and Regents differ according to the character of the institution. The oldest privately endowed universities, such as Harvard, have traditions formed through centuries of academic experience which make the course of its trustees comparatively clear. With its thousands of graduates of all shapes of thought, social status and religious views; with its prestige and its international reputation; with its multitudes of professors of every variety of opinion who are her crown of glory, this ancient ornament of the New World can be complacent and calm even when clamour rises high, unmoved by the tremors of a protester or the spasms of a revolutionist.

In denominational colleges the pathway of the trustee is narrower, but it also is so hedged in that he may be constrained to limit the freedom, even the academic freedom, of a professor whose utterances endanger denominational support. Peril is always lurking that some word will be spoken inconsistent with the principles on which the institution is founded and maintained.

But the most difficult position of all is that of the Governors of a provincial, or the Regents of a State University. Their problems are extraordinarily complex. Governors are trustees. They have to maintain the well-being of an institution upon which the intellectual life of a province depends. They must see to it that its youth are enabled to secure at home so good an education that they will not need to emigrate, and that the university is equipped for the fulfilment of all its functions, including the extension of the boundaries of knowledge. Their duty is to secure the best persons available for the professorial office. Teachers should have a broad training and should have come into contact with leading scholars, thinkers or scientists of the day, in order that those whom they teach shall not be deprived of the influences that prevail in the centres of the world's intellectual activity. Their views are presumably the result of profound and severe study pursued in a philosophical spirit. That they may differ on occasion from those of some of the governors is quite probable, though governors themselves often would not agree among themselves, and might easily be mistaken as

to the prevailing opinion of a province. But a university whose professors were chosen by popular vote would soon lose its freedom, and its prestige would disappear were their liberty to be dependent upon political issues, as experience in other lands has abundantly proved. Sir Michael Sadler warned the Oxford Conference of the "danger of making our universities pale reflections of merely one side of English opinion; what we want is many institutions among which we may have faithful witnesses to unpopular truths."* To challenge a professor's competency, apart from the mere fact of inability to teach, involves either a technical knowledge which few but his peers possess, or the denial that there is a place in the University for his type of thought. As to the latter the history of universities makes it clear that it is safer to tolerate an erratic or even provocative teacher than to have the University, which is a most sensitive human organism, suffer from the shock due to the inhibition of normal functioning in one of its parts. Perchance a prophet, albeit a minor prophet, may appear in a university, and prophets nearly always find the times out of joint, and meet much opposition; more, however, as a rule from the outside public than from within. Lest he be a true prophet it is well to be very tolerant, especially as students are disconcertingly candid and unafraid, and will soon detect the spurious afflatus of a false prophet.

The growth of liberty, and of its companion virtue, toleration, has been slow and painful; toilsome, even regressive at times, the process of education; the end of the journey is not yet in sight, and "the road winds uphill all the way". Were we never jolted out of the path, it were well to ask whether our carriers are asleep on their task and we lost in dreaming over what lies below us. But men of good-will, bent upon the quest of ever reaching a more glorious prospect, will fall only to rise again, and in patience will win their souls abiding in the spirit of the words of Jeremy Taylor written more than three hundred years ago:

"If we all impartially endeavour to find a truth, since this endeavour and search only is within our power, that we shall find it being 'ab extra' a gift and an assistance extrinsical, I can see no reason why this pious endeavour to find out truth shall not be of more force to unite us in the bonds of charity, than the misery it shall be to disunite us."

*An almost ludicrous confirmation of this view has just occurred in the State of Kentucky, where a bill has passed one reading of the legislature to prohibit the use in the schools of the State of any book adopting Evolution as a scientific theory. That such a bill should have been introduced is arousing comments throughout the United States ranging from consternation to scorn and ridicule.

**END OF
TITLE**